

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE AINEW YORK TIMES
4 March 1987

Webster of F.B.I. Is Named Director of C.I.A.

By GERALD M. BOYD

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 3 — President Reagan said today that he would nominate William H. Webster as the Director of Central Intelligence. The President thus seemed to seek to restore agency morale and move his Administration dramatically beyond the Iran-contra scandal.

The choice of Mr. Webster, now the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, was announced late today after an intense White House search to find a candidate before the President addressed the nation on the Iran affair at 9 o'clock Wednesday night.

In the past the F.B.I. has been at odds with the Central Intelligence Agency, and Mr. Reagan's selection seemed highly unusual.

Desire for a Swift Move

Administration officials said it had come about because of the belief that Mr. Webster, a former Federal appellate judge, would win Senate confirmation easily and because of the President's desire to make a swift selection after withdrawing his nomination of Robert M. Gates, the agency's Deputy Director, on Monday. Mr. Gates's name was withdrawn because of his association with the Iran-contra affair, although he has denied that he was seriously involved in that matter.

Urging that strategy was one of the first actions of Howard H. Baker Jr. as the new White House chief of staff.

Bob Dole of Kansas, the leader of the Republican minority in the Senate, said Mr. Webster's selection would help the intelligence agency, whose top job has been vacant since the resignation last month of William J. Casey after he underwent surgery for a brain tumor.

Giuliani Mentioned for F.B.I.

"William Webster's selection means that the C.I.A. job will be filled by a real professional," Mr. Dole said, "who understands the ins and outs of the intelligence community and will provide a sure and steady hand at the agency."

There was no clear indication of whom Mr. Reagan would select to replace Mr. Webster, now entering his final year of a 10-year contract to head the F.B.I.

Three names were being prominently mentioned among Justice Department officials this evening: Associate Attorney General Stephen S. Trott, who formerly headed the Justice Department's criminal division; Rudolph W. Giuliani, the United States At-

torney in Manhattan, who served as Associate Attorney General in Mr. Reagan's first term; and D. Lowell Jensen, the former Deputy Attorney General, who is now a Federal District Judge in San Francisco.

Mr. Jensen, who has known and worked with Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d for many years, served as Assistant Attorney General in charge of the criminal division and Associate Attorney General in Mr. Reagan's first term.

Mr. Jensen, Mr. Trott and Mr. Giuliani could not be reached for comment. But Mr. Giuliani's office indicated that he had not been approached about the F.B.I. position as yet.

Tower Rejected the Post

The naming of Mr. Webster to the intelligence post came after the President's first choice, former Senator John G. Tower, rejected several overtures. It was Mr. Tower, a Republican from Texas, who led the tough inquiry into the Iran-contra affair that resulted in the stern criticisms that Mr. Reagan must address Wednesday night.

One close friend of Mr. Tower's said the former Senator had told White House officials he was fired after directing the three-month investigation and wanted to return to Texas. Mr. Baker asked him to reconsider today, but to no avail, the friend said.

The announcement about Mr. Webster came on one of Mr. Reagan's busiest and most public days since controversy over the American sale of arms to Iran began in late November.

Reagan Meets With Reporters

The President visited with a large group of National Security Council staff employees to urge them to present him with all options on important issues and to make sure that the "rule of law" was respected.

Mr. Reagan also met the press in the White House briefing room for the first time since Nov. 25. It was at the November meeting that he introduced Attorney General Meese, who then made the surprise announcement that a National Security Council aide had diverted funds from the Iran arms sale to aid Nicaraguan insurgents.

The selection of Mr. Webster, called "Judge" by his friends, for the C.I.A. was urged by White House officials as a demonstration that Mr. Reagan was reaching for a candidate with impeccable credentials.

Mr. Webster appears to have played no role in the Iran arms initiative and was not even questioned by the three

members of the Tower Commission. Attorney General Meese told the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in testimony late last year that he had discussed the Iran affair with Mr. Webster on Nov. 21, 1986, after being asked by the President to prepare an account of what had taken place.

Mr. Meese testified that at that point, he and Mr. Webster agreed there was no criminal matter involved and that it would not be appropriate to bring in the F.B.I.

Others Who Were Candidates

Marlin Fitzwater, the White House spokesman, said the President called Mr. Webster about 10:20 this morning to offer him the intelligence job. Mr. Webster said he wanted some time to think about it, and accepted the post several hours later.

Mr. Webster had been on the list of candidates when Mr. Reagan decided to nominate Mr. Gates as the replacement for Mr. Casey.

White House officials said that after Mr. Tower's refusal, a list of about 12 names was narrowed to three early this morning, with Mr. Webster emerging as the leading candidate. They said other prominent candidates included Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, the former chief United States delegate to the United Nations, and John W. Vessey, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Officials said that despite intense news speculation, no offer had been made to Brent Scowcroft, a former national security adviser to President Ford. Mr. Scowcroft had also served on the special Presidential review panel and had been a popular choice among many members of Congress.

One official said that Mr. Scowcroft, however, had been opposed by Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger, who was upset in 1983 when a Presidential commission headed by the former Air Force general was critical of some Administration arms control policies.

White House officials said a draft of Mr. Reagan's broadcast address, which was being prepared today, had the President taking full responsibility for the scandal in stronger language than his previous statements, which had been confined to acknowledging that mistakes were made in the implementation of the policy.

They said it had not been decided, however, if Mr. Reagan would issue a categorical apology for the sale of arms to the Teheran regime in violation of previous American policy.

The speech is being prepared with the assistance of an outside writer who was recruited by Nancy Reagan.